

GROWTH OF GERMAN INFLUENCE

German invasion of Russia in June, 1941, this fifth column assumed tremendous importance. It would, if possible, wreck the Transiranian railway, the only available road of supplies to Russia.

Details of what happened in the British-Soviet-Iranian relations as a result of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union will be related in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that, following an ultimatum, Britain and Russia occupied Iran in August of 1941 and promptly interned the majority of the German citizens residing in the country. Despite this drastic action the apparatus of the German fifth column was not entirely destroyed. On the contrary, a few enterprising agents managed to revive their secret organization and seriously to imperil the Allied war effort in Iran.

The story of their initial success and ultimate failure goes back to October, 1940, when two German secret service men, Roman Gamotta and Franz Mayr, arrived in Iran ostensibly to work for the transport firm, Nouvelle Iran Express. They were followed by another agent, Major Julius Berthold Schulze, who in April, 1941, arrived in Tabriz as consular secretary.

The internment of German citizens in August, 1941, brought temporary havoc to their plans, but Gamotta, Mayr, and Schulze managed to escape arrest. Gamotta fled to Turkey and thence proceeded to Berlin. Schulze fled from Tabriz just before the Red Army entered the town and subsequently reached Teheran. *From there* the German Minister, Herr Ettel, dispatched him as a diplomatic courier to Afghanistan. Before crossing the border, however, Schulze and his wife were arrested by the Iranian authorities and brought back to Teheran. Pending an official investigation into the

question of his diplomatic status, Schulze was allowed to live in the German Legation. Some time afterward he and his wife escaped to the south. There he initiated an intrigue among the Qashqai tribesmen with the view of dividing Iran into two puppet states.

Meanwhile Mayr, aided by an Armenian friend, managed to live in hiding throughout the winter of 1941-1942. In January, 1942, he established contact with an Iranian anti-Allied group. Under his guidance this group was to act as a revived fifth column. It was organized as a national movement called *Melliyun-i-Imn* and